

The Brahmavadin

SATURDAY, 7TH DECEMBER 1895.

INCARNATION.

"The doctrine of the Divine Word is Platonic ; the doctrine of the Incarnation is Indian ; of a divine kingdom is Judaic ; of angels and demons is Magian." This remark about the eclectic nature of Christian doctrines is quoted from no less a personage than the great Cardinal Newman. The distinctly Judaic contributions to the doctrines of Christianity are indeed of the least metaphysical value, and the doctrines here attributed to the Platonic and Magian sources are also Indian doctrines, as every careful student of the Veda and the Vedānta knows. Whether Jesus during the three years of his religious ministry actually preached and propagated these very doctrines himself to his disciples and others, or whether the early Christian Church absorbed them from outside and assimilated them into its own dogmas is a question of very great historical and religious interest. It does not, however, belong to our province to enter into a discussion of this question. Moreover, remembering, as we do, with what "rarity of Christian charity" the Honorable and Rev. William Miller, the well-known Principal of the Madras Christian College, was in our own neighbourhood only recently attacked by blind bigotry, for his having declared that there were certain valuable truths in Hinduism, which the Christian Church would do well to assimilate, we are compelled to believe that Christian orthodoxy has a tendency to get too easily offended, even when people state what is absolutely true, if it only happens to be somewhat new. It is against the principles of Vedāntism, and therefore against our declared policy, to enter into any kind of quarrel with any neighbouring religion. We work for peace and harmony among religions ; and nothing saddens our heart so much as to know that one religion has, in the past, improved the stock of truths in another, or that it is still capable of doing so in the future.

The doctrine of Incarnation is wholly against the genius of the religion of the Semites. The

Jews could understand that their prophets were divinely inspired, but it has been to them a stumbling block to realise the divinity of Christ. To their minds it has always appeared to be equal to blasphemy to think of any man, however great and however good and however full of divine inspiration, as being an incarnation of the Divinity. The Jehovah of the "chosen people" dealt with them, and even now is supposed to deal with them, in the way in which the shepherd deals with the sheep of his flock. Can the shepherd ever become the sheep? Even if he can, will he? The God who is far far away from, and altogether other than man cannot and will not become man. Even the shepherd's love for the sheep is infinite. The most favoured among them can be said to have become the same as the shepherd. While Christianity considers Jesus to be an Incarnation of God, the religion of Islam thinks of him only as a prophet ; and even Mahomed is only a messenger of God to the Mussulmans. There is in all probability some truth in the supposition that the ardent religious zeal of Mahomed was to some extent roused by his coming into contact with the Nestorian form of Christianity in Asia Minor ; and it is highly instructive to notice how the doctrine of Incarnation seems to have struck him as tending to substitute the worship of man in the place of the worship of God. The narrowly anthropomorphic and tribal conception of God which the Jews and the Arabians have had all along, even after their religions ceased to be local and tribal, is responsible for their incapacity to comprehend the truth and beauty of the idea of Incarnation. The Christian Church also is still too much under this blinding and illiberal influence of Judaism, and recognises only one instance of Divine Incarnation. But to understand properly the rational metaphysical foundation of the doctrine of Incarnation even in regard to one case of actual Incarnation is to see its possibility in many others.

We have no doubt that almost every student of Christian Theology knows that there is a close connection between the doctrine of the Divine Word and the doctrine of Incarnation. The indebtedness of the Christian Church to the Platonic philosophy of the Alexandrian Jew Philo is a well known matter of history. "His Logos is the Divine in the Universe—it is an exteriorised God ; it is the legislator, the revealer, the organ of God as regards spiritual man Philo has no idea

of the Messiah, and establishes no connection between his *Logos* and the divine being which was dreamt of by his compatriots in Palestine The end of man is to know the *Logos*; to contemplate reason; that is to say, God and the Universe. By that knowledge man finds life, the true manna that nourishes." Such is the statement given by Renan of the doctrine of the Divine Word as found in Philo; and clearly it is the establishment of a close connection between the Platonic *Logos* and the Jewish Messiah that has led to the narrowing of the vision of the Christian Church in regard to the doctrine of Incarnation. The Christian Clement of Alexandria is said to have borrowed largely from Philo; and Max Müller says, "To him (Clement) the story of the world was a divine drama, a preparation for the revelation of God in man. In the very beginning man had been a manifestation of the Divine *Logos*, and therefore divine in his nature. Why should not man have risen at last to his full perfection, to be what he had been meant to be from the first in the counsel of the Father?" It is easy enough to see that both the Jewish Philo and the Christian Clement must have believed in the oneness of the human and the divine natures, for they both give a highly rational and universal meaning to the *Logos* and come very near indeed to the Vedantic conception of God and creation. If these essential doctrines of the Divine Word and of Incarnation are foreign to the genius of Judaism, it certainly cannot be said to be the true mother of Christianity. To us it seems to have very effectively played the part of the stepmother.

Of the two well-known living religions in the world which believe in Incarnation, namely, Christianity and Hinduism, it is conceded on all hands that the former has borrowed this vitally important doctrine from outside. It must be borne in mind that the Platonic doctrine of the *Logos* did not give rise to the doctrine of Incarnation in Greece itself. It is the focussing together of all elevated Asiatic religious influences, particularly those of India, in the schools of thought of Alexandria that made it possible to associate the idea of Incarnation with the idea of the Divine Word, so as to lead people to suppose that the one is a necessary corollary from the other. Historically, however, the Christian Church does not seem to have derived the idea of the Incarnation from the idea of the *Logos*, although such a derivation is philosophically both possible and reasonable. St.

Clement's idea that God becomes man in order that man may become God is as old as the Indian Vedas. The Vedic idea of creation itself is that it is an act of Divine Incarnation. To the Indian mind the universe has all along appeared as the conditioned manifestation or embodiment of the one unconditioned absolute Brahman. Our famous *Purushasûkta* (*Rigveda*, X, 90), which has unfortunately been often misunderstood both in India and outside, makes it distinctly clear that the Universe is simply Divinity Incarnate, not in language suited to the conventional creed of the poet, but in weighty words intended to teach earnest and sober truth.

पुरुषएवेदं सर्वं यद्वृत्तं यच्चभव्यं ।
उतामृतत्वेशानो यदन्नेनातिरोहति॥
एतावानस्य महिमातो ज्यायांश्चपरुषः ।
पादोऽस्य विश्वाभूतानि त्रिपादस्यामृतं दिवि ॥

Purusha himself is this whole universe, whatever has been and whatever shall be. He is the Lord of Immortality which waxes greater still by food. Such is His greatness; yea, greater than this is Purusha. All creatures are one-fourth of Him; three-fourths of Him are eternal life in heaven." The idea of God sacrificing Himself to create the worlds is one that may be seen to run through the whole of Vedic literature; and Mrs. Besant interprets this idea in the language of the West, in her article in the *Nineteenth Century* on the Doctrine of Atonement written in reply to Mr. Gladstone, when she says, "If the world be the work of the *Logos*, and the law of the world's progress in the whole and the parts is sacrifice, then the Law of Sacrifice must point to something in the very nature of the *Logos*; it must have its root in the Divine Nature itself. A little further thought shews us that if there is to be a world, a universe at all, this can only be by the One Existence conditioning Itself and thus making manifestation possible, and that the very *Logos* is the Self-limited God; limited to become manifest, manifested to bring a universe into being; such self-limitation and manifestation can only be a supreme act of sacrifice, and what wonder that on every hand the world should show its birth-mark, and that the Law of Sacrifice should be the law of being, the law of the derived lives." Thus the Vedic idea of creation may be seen to give a natural and rational explanation of not only the doctrine of Incarnation, but also of another which is considered

to be peculiarly Christian, namely, the Doctrine of Atonement.

The Vedānta is even more explicit in its conception of the whole universe as Incarnate Divinity. The *Chhandogya Upanishad* (III, 14, 1) distinctly says, "All this is indeed *Brahman*. Let a man meditate (on the World) as beginning, ending, and breathing in It (*Brahman*)"—

सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म तज्जलानिति शान्तं उपासीत.

This conception of the universe as an embodiment of the Divine Principle is still more clearly brought out in the *Kathopanishad* (II, 5, 12—13)

एको वशी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा एकं बज्रं बहुदा यः करोति ।
तमात्मस्थं ये नु पश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम्
नित्यो नित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानां भेको ब्रह्मणा यो विदधाति
कामान् । तमात्मस्थं ये नु पश्यन्ति धीरास्तेषां शान्तिश्चा
श्वती नेतरेषाम् ॥

"There is one ruler, the Self within all things, who makes the one root-principle manifold. The wise who perceive him within their self, to them belongs eternal happiness, not to others. The One belongs eternal happiness, not to others. The One Eternal Life fulfils the desires of many non-eternal lives. The wise who perceive Him within their self, to them belongs eternal peace, not to others." Thus the Upanishads leave no impassable gulf between man and God as the religions of the Semitic peoples do. To the Vedāntin there is nothing strange in God becoming man or man becoming God; for, according to him, they are both of like nature. The one duty that the Vedānta imposes on every man is that he should try to become God. When the despotic distance between Man and God is thus reasonably abolished, it is no wonder that all worthy men will realise the strength and responsibility of the divine dignity of their nature, and shew to the world by the unmistakable example of their lives that that God becomes man is not more certain than that man may become God.

"Speak to Him thou for He hears, and Spirit with
Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands
and feet
God is Law, say the wise; O Soul, and let us rejoice,
For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

Law is God, say some: no God at all, says the fool;
For all we have power to see a straight staff bent in a
pool;
And the ear of man cannot hear, and the eye of man
cannot see;
But if we could see and hear, this Vision—were it not
He?"

The *Bhagavadgītā* gives us a fuller exposition of the Indian Doctrine of Incarnation. In it (IV,

5—9) we have the distinct enunciation of the nature and purpose of Incarnation.

बहूनि मे व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वेत्थ परंतप ॥
अजोऽपि सन्न व्ययात्मा भूतानमीश्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाभ्यात्ममायया ॥
यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥
जन्मकर्मचमेदिव्यमेवं यो वेत्ति तत्त्वतः ।
त्यक्त्वा देहं पुनर्जन्म नैति मामेति सोऽर्जुन ॥

"You and I have passed through many births, O Arjuna. I know them all, but you know them not, Parantapa. Though unborn, the imperishable Self, and also the Lord of all beings, ruling over Nature which is mine own, I am born through My *Mâyā*. Whenever there is decay of religion and exaltation of irreligion, O Bhārata, then I myself come forth. For the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil-doers, for the sake of firmly establishing religion, I am born from age to age. He, who thus knows My divine birth and action in their true nature, is not born again, having abandoned the body; but he comes unto me, O Arjuna." It may appear that here there is implied a radical and irreconcilable distinction between the nature of God and that of man, although God has become man more than once. As if to correct this very doubt we have it in the same discourse in the *Gītā* (IV, 34—35) that all beings are to be seen in the Self and then in God.

तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।
उपदेक्ष्यंति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः ॥
यज्ज्ञात्वा न पुनर्मोहमेवं यास्यसि पांडव ।
येन भूतान्यशेषेण द्रक्ष्यस्यात्मन्यथो मायि ॥

"Learn this by worship, by questioning, and by serving. The wise, the seers of the essence of things will instruct you in the wisdom, by knowing which you shall not again get thus confused, O Pāṇḍava, and by which you will see all beings in the self and then in Me." There is no misunderstanding the meaning of Sri Krishna here; and His Universal Form—विश्वरूप—exhibited before the wondering eyes of Arjuna, a graphic

description of which is to be found in the eleventh chapter of the Gîtâ, goes to make assurance doubly sure in regard to this point. But it may well be asked what the meaning of any special Divine Incarnation can be, when Incarnation is not only the law but also the essence of creation in general. Sri Krishna again gives us the answer (*Gîtâ*, X, 41-42.)

यदाद्भिभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेववा ।

तत्तदेवावगच्छ त्वं मम तज्ज्ञासेसमम् ॥

अथवा बहुनैतेन किं ज्ञानेन त्वार्जुना ।

विष्टम्याहमिदं कृत्स्नमेकांशेन स्थितो जगत् ॥

"Whatsoever is royal, good, prosperous, and mighty, understand thou that to go forth from My splendour. What is the use of such knowledge (of details) to you, O Arjuna? Having pervaded the whole universe with a portion of Myself, I exist." In the tenth Chapter of the Gîtâ is pointed out that excellence of all kinds in all things is of divine origin and nature, and that without the presence of God in man human perfection is impossible. The greater the excellence and perfection displayed in the life of any man the more of God has he in him. But all the excellence and perfection of this world is only a part of His divine sovereignty of power and perfection.

पादोऽस्य विश्वभूतानि त्रिपादस्यामृतं दिवि ॥

"His creations are one-fourth of Him, three-fourths of Him are eternal life in heaven."—*Om Tat Sat*.

Translation.

VEDĀRTHA SANGRAHA.

A DISCOURSE ON THE UPANISHADS.

By SRI RA'MA'NUJA.

The idea is "Have you heard (and learnt) about *Brahman* also, which forms the cause of the origin, the sustentation, and the dissolution of the whole universe, and which is the ocean of infinite transcendental virtues, such as omniscience, desiring the Truth, willing the Truth and so forth?" Because it (*Brahman*) is the cause of all, the father—bearing in mind that the cause itself, existing in a variety of peculiar forms is called effect; and that by the knowledge of the *Brahman*, which forms the cause, and which has for its body the subtle (uninvolved) *chit* (mind) and *achit* (matter), the whole universe

forming the effect becomes known—asks the son, "Have you enquired about that) by hearing, conceiving and knowing which, the unheard, the unconceived, the unknown, become (the same as) the heard, the conceived, and the known?" But the son not understanding that the father had in his heart the idea of a single cause for the whole collection of things and thinking that, among things which are different from one another, the knowledge of one cannot bring about the knowledge of another, objects. "How, sir, is such an *Adesha* (possible)?" And thus objected to, the father desiring to say exactly what he had in his mind—viz., that the Supreme *Brahman* himself whose essence is intelligence, bliss, and purity; who is of immeasurable excellence; who is possessed of infinite, inestimable and innumerable auspicious qualities, like the quality of desiring the Truth and so on; whose nature is unchangeable; and who has the subtle *chit* (mind) and *achit* (matter), which are unsuited to be differentiated by means of name and form, for the body; has, out of a portion of himself, by his own will, and for his own sport, assumed the shape of the universe consisting of endless wonderful moving and motionless things: and that by the knowledge of that (*Brahman*) all else becomes the same as known—gives an illustration familiarly known in the world to prove that cause and effect are not different from one another, and says, "My dear son, even as by the knowledge of a ball of clay, all things made of clay become known, the difference being only in name arising from speech, the truth being that all is certainly clay, &c."

'LIGHT OF GRACE'

OR

'THIRUVARUTPAYAN.'

OF UMA'PATHI SIVA CHARYA.

[The work in question is one of the fourteen Siddhanta Sastras and the author, one of the four *Santhana Acharyas* or saints and exponents of the Tamil Philosophy. Though he is the last of the four saints, he is the author of eight out of the fourteen Siddhanta works, the most important of which, *Sivaprakasam* or 'Light of God' was translated more than 40 years ago by the Rev. H. R. Hisington of Ceylon and published in Vol. IV of the Journal of the American Oriental Society. In Southern India, the Divine songs of the Great Saints, Guanasambantha, Vakisa or Appar, Sundaram and Manickavachaka are popular and properly known as the Tamil Veda and Prof. Sundram Pillai, M. A., in his bright little brochure on the age of Guanasambantha, aptly calls the fourteen Siddhanta works, the Tamil Veda or Upanishads. And there can be no doubt that we have in these works, the brightest and largest gems picked out from the Diamond Mines of the Sanskrit Vedantic works; washed and polished and arranged in the most beautiful and symmetrical way in the diadem of Indian Thought.

Coming to the author, I might say he was the leading Light in Philosophy, Religion and Literature about the close of the 13th and beginning of the 14th century A. D. That he was as great in spirit as he was in intellect, there is no doubt. Though he ranked as one of the Holy Three Thousand Brahmins of the Sacred Shrine at Chidambaram and the most learned of them, he did not disdain to become the humble slave of *Marai Gnanasambantha* who was third in succession from the Great Meikanda Deva, and eat the leavings of his Master's leaf, for which he was persecuted by his caste and made to live outside the limits of Chidambaram, in a place called Kotravankudi. Though he was learned in the Veda and Vedanta and the Great Bashiams, he did not disdain to interpret these truths to the common people, in their common language. His spirituality was soon enough recognised, and the very same Brahmins had to call him back again to be present at the opening ceremony of their grand Annual Festival, *Aruthra Darshan*, and one of his short works called 'Kodikavi' was composed on this occasion. And he wrote the History of the Temple (Chidambaram) called 'Koirpuran' in Tamil. This work is unsurpassed in elegance of diction and style. He wrote a brief summary of the 'Lives of the Saints' 'Peria Puran' and wrote the life of the writer of the 'Lives of the Saints', Sekkilar, and a book on the Discovery of the Thevaram and several other religious works. His great work in Sanskrit is his Bashiam or Commentary on the *Pauslikara Agama*, still in manuscript and preserved in the Library of the Thiruvavaduthurai Mutt. This is represented as a philosophic work of very rare merits. That he was an able dialectician is manifest from the fact recorded in his 'Sankarpanikaranam' and the work itself. This book refers to a disputation which he had during the Ani Festival in Sahrahana era 1235, with a number of learned men of different schools and the arguments advanced by them and the replies given by him. The arguments are so well turned and logical, that as the preface itself sets forth, it is the book for the true Student of Logic and Philosophy. I have already referred to his freedom from the trammels of caste; and that he was as broadminded in the lines of thought he pursued, is manifest from the dictum he lays down in his preface to 'Sivaprakasam' namely 'that everything old is necessarily not true and that everything new is necessarily not false. He sets forth in stanza 7 of the same work, to what School of Philosophy he belongs. All philosophies, in the main attempt to define the relation of God to the world and to justify his ways to man. As such, our philosopher says he is not an *Atōta Vadi*, who asserts (Idealist and Materialist) equality, succession or causation between God and the world. Nor is he a *Beda Vadi* who asserts (Realists Dvaiti) co-existence, entire separateness and difference and externality of one from the other; nor a *Bedabeda Vadi* who (Vishistadvaiti) asserts co-existence or co-inherence of two things. He is none of these, but he is an Advaiti, a Vedanta *Siddhanti*, who postulates

a relation, the nearest parallel or analogy to which is furnished by the relation of Body and Mind (உடல்உயிர்) and the relation of the eye and the sun as involved in an act of perception. Coming to the work in question, it is intended as a companion volume to the famous Kural of Thiruvalluvar, which dealt with the first three Purusharthams or Supreme ends of Life, namely Dharma, Artha and Kama and left untouched the debateable ground of what is regarded as the highest of all ends, namely Moksha; not that Thiruvalluvar was unmindful of the last and did not wish to inculcate the Love of God and the Worship of Him in all love and in all spirit. He pertinently asks, in fact, in his very first chapter, "What is the use of all learning, if it does not lead one to the Feet of the Supreme Intelligence." In fact, the first chapter condenses all his views of God and his relation to the world in 10 couplets; and what is comprised in one chapter and in 10 couplets of Kural, this work expands into 10 chapters of 10 couplets each, the versification adopted being the same; and the very first verse of the latter follows the language of the earlier work. The work is called the Light or Fruits of Grace, or the workings of Divine Love, and the fourth chapter, which follows the exposition of the *Three Patharthas* and their relation to each other, is devoted to the discussion of the nature of *Arul* or Divine Love and its greatness. And how it influences men who have felt its touch is described in the last couplet of the book.

“கள்ளத்தலைவர் துயர்கருதி தக்கருளை
வெள்ளத்தலைவர் மிக.”

(Out of the depths of their Love, they are troubled and tossed about for the sorrows of their cringing kind).

The further merits of the work can only be appreciated by its thorough study and the translation of the work will be published in this paper in parts. For bringing out the force of the extremely short and concise couplets, the queries and notes are added by commentators.]

CHAPTER I.

NATURE OF THE SUPREME.

1. Like the letter 'A,' the Incomparable Lord is all Intelligence and pervades everything without change.

NOTES.

The incomparable is here compared with the object of making the student comprehend the subject more easily. He is at the same time told that He is Incomparable (தீதகம்).

The points of comparison are:

(1) A (அ) is the first letter and the primary sound pronounced by the mere opening of the mouth and without any modification of the organs.

(2) All other vowels are its modifications and without its aid none of the consonants can be sounded.

(3) It loses its form when in conjunction with the consonants, as in (அக).

In like manner, God is the first cause, He is the life of life. He is without change. He becomes non-apparent when in union with the world.

Here the points of resemblance cease and the other words in the couplet indicate the points of difference.

(1) 'A' itself requires a human intelligence to utter and therefore inert, unintelligent.

God is all Intelligence (அறிவு).

(2) 'A' is a mere human breath; God is the Great Breath giving life to all breaths. (எங்கும்).

(3) 'A' can be pronounced separately and in conjunction with other sounds.

God is always inseparably connected with the universe of mind and matter. (கீழ்க்கும் கிடைத்த).

This inseparable relation of God to the universe is what is called Adwaitam, and I have pointed out in my notes to 'Sivagnanabotham,' how apt an analogy is furnished by vowels and consonants (உயிர் ஒழுங்கு), in addition to the two illustrations of mind and body and eye and sun already referred to above. His nature can only be understood by understanding his relation to ourselves.

Correspondence.

THE RELIGION OF LOVE.

Love is a sort of sweet attraction towards an object which pleases the soul. The culmination of love is effected when the lover and the beloved become one with each other. The chief point of attraction is beauty. By beauty we generally mean the beauty of appearance; but that is not all, for, we also talk of such things as beauty of character, beauty of style, of diction and so on. In these latter cases, beauty does not mean the beauty of form or appearance. Then what is the all-comprehensive meaning of the word beauty? Let us see what gives rise to the idea of beauty in us. In all beautiful things, the chief feature is their symmetry. Take, for instance, a beautiful boy. His two blue eyes are alike in all respects, so are his two ears, hands and legs; the fingers in his right and left hands and the toes in the feet are of a symmetrical nature. If there is any want of symmetry in any part of his body, his beauty will be deficient in that part. So we see that this sense of symmetry is the principal part of the idea of beauty. When two musical sounds are of the same pitch there is concord between them, and harmony between sounds is dependent upon nearness in their nature; and contrarily, when two sounds are very different from one another no such harmony is produced, but discordance is the result. Wherever there is want of symmetry and want of harmony, there is want of beauty also, and consequently of attraction. The beauty of character in a certain individual is admitted only when his actions are in strict harmony with his words and these with his thoughts, and again when his actions are all in strict harmony

with sound morality. In the beauty of style and diction the harmony of thought and language is the chief, if not the only, thing requisite. The sensation of pleasure itself may be said to be dependent upon the harmony between the feeling subject and the felt object. It is a patent fact that we have an innate inclination to court pleasure and avoid pain. So we see that love is a pleasurable feeling produced by the perception of physical, intellectual, or moral beauty which, in its turn, is produced by due symmetry and harmony.

All this while we have been dealing with love other than the spiritual. This is the love which mainly forms the theme of all poetry and all romance. The aim of most people is the attainment of worldly prosperity. The man who has wealth and on whom the sunshine of woman's love and children's smile is playing is generally considered to be fortunate; and wealth and woman are therefore centres of special attraction for the man of the world. This love of wealth and woman is the greatest of all binding powers that tethers the lovely human soul to the earth, mutilating its high-soaring pinions of eternal freedom, and thereby disabling it to rise even to the extent of an inch above the low concerns of this world. It levels down man to the rank of grovelling creatures, and inducing him to sacrifice all his unsullied and endless divine bliss on the altar of an ever-shifting Nature alternately doling out to him a little pleasure and a good deal more of bitter pain, even as insects sacrifice their lives by springing upon the flame of a brilliant fire, fascinated and charmed by its glow. Says the great *Bhāṣyakāra* Sankarāchārya in his *Vivekachūḍāmaṇi*, "The deer dies by the hunter's arrow, having been previously lulled to unconsciousness by his sweet lyre; the male elephant dies by going to enjoy the soft embrace of the she-elephant sent to decoy him into a strong enclosure; the insect, charmed by the bright and lustrous blaze of the fire, sacrifices itself in the fire; the fish, allured by the bait of the angler, is drawn out of its element to die on the land; the *Blumara*, fascinated by the aroma of the lotus settles in its bosom forgetting his own home, till, in the evening, he buzzes in vain to get out of it, being arrested within by its closed petals. All these creatures sacrifice themselves to their special bias in favour of a single sense only. What wonder then, that man, having been endowed with a full exercise of all the five senses, sacrifices all his wisdom, love of truth, and freedom for their sake?"

The common man is always in pursuit of new pleasures. In his search after pleasure he has often to encounter many evils, and very frequently it so turns out that, after a successive series of struggles, he finds his search leading him to heavy misfortune which gives rise to troubles and dangers unknown to him before. But although he frequently experiences such painfully rough weather in life, he is not a whit the less assiduous in ceaselessly renewing his struggles for the pursuit of pleasure. The love of the pleasures of the senses is the cause of much woe little happiness to man;

it is virtually a bane to him; still under constraint and proper guidance it may even become the cause of his real improvement. For instance if a man has a good ear for music together with the gift of a good voice, and if he gradually sacrifices all other pleasures for his love of music, in course of time he will naturally learn how to devote his entire heart to the cultivation of that one thing of his choice; his mind then will no longer be like a hungry dog always running hither and thither in search of something or other to alleviate its hunger, but finally he will, through his music, find peace within himself. The love of the pleasures of the senses proceeds from the desire for self-gratification. This is merely the selfish love of pleasure. There is a higher and nobler form of love which requires self-sacrifice, and the genuineness of this love varies directly with the amount of the sacrifice one makes.

Now let me turn to another aspect of love. There is the love between a husband and a wife. It has been seen that the unrestrained human mind always tends towards the unrestricted enjoyment of whatever is pleasing to it, and is in consequence led to and fro by its passions and appetites. It is therefore plain that if a man begins to love his wife, and her alone, he must curb and kill his unbridled passion for all other beautiful women. Where the husband is true to the wife, and the wife true to the husband, their mutual love, daily increasing, will ultimately give their minds a firmness and stability unknown before. It is owing to this conjugal love, this fidelity between husband and wife, that human society enjoys peace, and this temporary earthly residence of ours appears to be a home, a sweet home, to us. Our Scriptures lavish their highest honor and praise upon the good woman who has made her husband the sole delight of her life, the one God in whom she has found the fulfilment of all her earthly desires. The holy appellation of *Sati*, which means the eminently virtuous woman, is awarded to her, her blessings are sought after equally by men and women, and her example is eagerly followed by others of her own sex. The birth of sons and daughters is the crowning consummation of this love. Husband and wife become father and mother, and they see in their children their own images destined to inherit the glories of the earth after them.

Thus love flows forth in diverse ways. The love which flows from the hearts of the parents towards their children and that from the children towards their parents, is generally termed affection. Then again there is the love between brothers and sisters; and when these brothers and sisters have their children and when the latter, in their turn, have their children too and so on, the immensely increased family becomes a society and then there is to be found love amongst its members, love which is termed fellow-feeling or sympathy.

Self-interest is the cause of all quarrel. In a society, therefore, where men and women are more or less inclined to look after their own individual interests, quarrel becomes inevitable. But since the true lover or the *physis* spirit has the mini-

mum of selfishness together with the maximum of goodwill towards his fellow-men, he can have no quarrel with any one, and he stands as a mediator or peace-maker when any quarrel takes place in the society in which he lives and moves. Such men are indeed the mainstay of the well-being of society. It is plain that when a man wants but little for himself in this world, his mind naturally turns to meet the wants of others. He is then not satisfied by merely seeing his own family alone well fed and clad. On the other hand he is irresistibly led to provide for the relief of distress and suffering wherever it may be found. He weeps with those who weep and laughs with those who laugh. Envy and malice do not dare to step into his exalted mind and his heart is ever full of the still higher love—the love of God. It is in him that Christians will see the man after Christ's own heart inasmuch as such a man loves his enemies, blesses them that curse him, does good to them that hate him, and prays for them who despitefully use him and persecute him. He is therefore, as Christ says, the true child of his Father who is in Heaven, who "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

It is a well-known proverb, that familiarity breeds contempt. Satiety is the bane of pleasure-seekers, and they always hanker after new pleasures. But the true lover's eye knows no satiety. A man like Cowper, whose poetry flows forth full of an unfeigned love of Nature, can alone say:

"Scenes must be beautiful, while daily view'd
Please daily, and whose novelty survives
Long knowledge and the scrutiny of years."

Such a man will surely feel in his heart of hearts, that

"Ten thousand warbles cheer the day, and one
The live long night: nor these alone, whose notes
Nice finger'd Art must emulate in vain,
But cawing rooks, and kites that swim sublime
In still repeated circles screaming loud,
The joy, the pie, e'en the boding owl,
That hails the rising moon, have charms for me."

Cowper's love of Nature was so intense that he spent a good part of his life in the country preferring it to the town. He closes the First Book of "The Task" with this beautiful eulogy on country life,—

"God made the country and man made the town
What wonder then that health and virtue, gifts
That can alone make sweet the bitter draught
That life holds out to all, should most abound
And least be threatened, in the fields and groves?"

Wordsworth, who dives deep into the heart of Nature, says with sublime pathos

"To me the meanest flower that blows can give
Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears"

The love of seclusion is invariably a characteristic of such men. They are the worshippers of Nature in her universal temple, and like true and devoted worshippers, they hold themselves aloof from the busy world, and love peace more than struggle and noise.

But the immortal soul of man can not rest satisfied by loving what is ephemeral and evanescent, although the love happens to be bestowed on poetically picturesque Nature herself. He may be much in love with the charming and shifting phenomenon of Nature's beauty; he may love his wife and children with much fidelity, tenderness, and affection; his philanthropic heart may be so much engrossed in ameliorating the conditions of his brethren as to lead him to forget for a time even his connection with all his surroundings, the evanescent and dubious nature of the things of his choice, and the innate conviction of his own immortal existence which lies deeply hidden in his inmost heart far beyond all superficial ken; still when his independent and eternal self asserts itself at last, he can not find any pleasure in what would then appear to him to be merely a mirage, a false, vanishing shadow. His soul then seeks after something which does not change, which is real and true. That alone can be an adequate thing of his choice, that alone can give rest and satisfaction to his yearning soul which is eternal. His heart and soul pant after that Eternal Being who is the one changeless entity in this changeful universe, who is the source of all life and light, of all beauty and harmony, and is the one intelligent Master Spirit who with his all-powerful magic wand bids Chaos and Night to bring forth Cosmos and Light. He who has come to know the eternal and immortal nature of the soul, will he tie it down with the bond of love to what is but ephemeral? We have seen that two things must harmonise with each other in nature in order to become united in love.

When such becomes the case with our lover, he gradually separates himself from all the things of the world, and concentrates all his love on the Eternal Spirit, the Lord and God of the Universe. At first his love, which, just before, was confined to the small things of the world, realizing the vastness, immensity, and grandeur of his newly chosen Beloved, becomes filled with awe and reverence. Gradually as he cultivates his new love, reverential devotion or *Bhakti* alone is seen to hold the mastery over his heart. When at last in the profundity of his love, all his former self-centred recollections sink one after another to rise no more, when in the intensity of his new love all other attractions are set to naught, when God and God alone is what is always present in his heart and soul, then in that sweet union of God and man, a harmony is produced the like of which is nowhere to be found in this world of ours. The lover has found his true Beloved at last. There is no end for his joy—a joy which is everlasting and ever increasing. And when in his turn the lover receives the blessings of love from his Beloved, to whose goodness and intense love there is no limit, to whose all-endearing beauty there is no parallel, who can describe the nature of the heavenly Bliss that reigns in his bosom then? The Beloved is ever ready to bestow on the devoted lover whatever is good for him even before he asks for it. "Every one that asketh receiveth"

(Matt., vii, 8.) "Whatever be the aims of those, who worship me, I readily fulfil them" (*Gītā*, iv, 11) "As the intense cold freezes the formless water and gives it a shape, so the intense love of the true lover gives form to the Formless One" says Bhagavān Śrī Rāmakrishna.

Such lovers see Him, their Beloved, in various lights, some of which I am now going to mention. Some see in him the perfection of peace and beatitude. They ultimately find their eternal rest and peace in him. These are *Sānta Bhaktas* or Peaceful Lovers. Some find in him at last their own dear and well-beloved Master, the sole Disposer of their destinies, to attain whom they were so long labouring and longing. He at last takes His servants into His eternally merciful custody, intrusts them with the knowledge of His mysteries, empowers them to achieve his will, and sends them forth as His own proxies wherever He is wanted. Through them He shows His mercy and love to mankind through them He saves all others from misery and wretchedness of spirit. They in fact become his trusted and beloved servants.

Some look upon Him as their Father, and the Father takes the sons to His own side and loves them with an affection which is far greater and more intense in quality and quantity, than all the combined affections of the whole human race. He appears Himself in his sons; the son of man thus actually becomes the son of God. The sons are His own reflections, His own images, His other selves, only more human than the Father.

Some look upon this sole centre of their delight, the Eternal One, as their Mother. She takes her children into Her own bosom, and makes them the source of pure delight and solace to all those who may be fortunate enough to have a sight of any of them. Some lovers with their hearts full of maternal affection have conceived the Eternal Being as a lovable and loving child engaged in the child's play of alternately making and unmaking the innumerable number of worlds. How many mother's hearts have derived strength and consolation by the contemplation of the lovely childhood of our own Śrī Krishna as poetically described in the *Śrī Bhāgavata* and others of our *Purāṇas*?

Some look at Him with friendly feelings and are rewarded with His eternal friendship. The redolent woods, and forest glades, and the pasture grounds of beautiful Gokula present to us a scene of such a friendship where a group of buxom, jolly and frolicsome shepherd boys are adorning their youthful Shepherd King Śrī Krishna with starry garlands and ornaments of gay forest flowers worked by the hands of sensitively delicate Love. In the reciprocation of such ardent friendly feelings the gay shepherd boys naturally find the pure bliss of divine love. The sublimely beautiful chapters of *Śrī Bhāgavata* are full of touchingly delicate descriptions of love viewed in all its aspects with the divine Śrī Krishna forming its worthy central figure.

Others look upon Him as their own dear and beloved Husband, and even the faintest

idea of the maddening ecstasy which these always experience when the soul of their souls, the heart of their hearts, answers their fervent devotion with an increasingly fervent and warm love infinitely surpassing their own, is an utter impossibility. The sweet canticles dropping like nectar drops from their amorous lips in praise of their Beloved are the divine and ecstatic melodies of the enamoured damsels of the picturesque Brindavana with its blooming groves alive, and adorned with sweetly singing and gaudily plumed birds. Our readers may advantageously call to their minds the immortal beauty and the imperishable truth which are embodied in the poetry of the Jewish *Song of Solomon*, and of the Indian *Gita Govinda*.

Above the harmful and imperfect offices of the senses, beyond the perfection of all mundane pleasures, and surpassing all human attempts at complete realisation, is this inexpressibly highest flight of sweet and sublime love. Now the lover and the Beloved get merged together both losing their separate individuality and becoming One at last. Our Sri Krishna is thus to us the many-sided God of this Religion of Love; and rightly does Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna ask "Is it not better to taste and enjoy the sweetness of sugar rather than be sugar itself?" My dear reader, the choice is wholly in your hands.

CALCUTTA.

A SANNYASIN.

Notes.

Professor Max Müller in writing to us says about the *Vedānta*, "I spend my happiest hours in reading Vedāntic books. They are to me like the light of the morning, like the pure air of the mountains—so simple, so true, if once understood."

The Advaita Sabha at Kumbhakonam.—Mr. A. Seshayya Sastrial, C.S.I., and Rao Bahadur S. Seshayya have deserved well of the Hindu community by their efforts to revive the study of the Vedānta in this Presidency. Some twenty-five Pandits responded to their call, including the renowned Mahamahopadhyaya Brahma Sri Raju Sastrial Avergal of Mannargudi. The Sabha lasted ten days, and the morning and evening of each day were devoted to the examination in the Vedānta of the candidates; and the early hours of each night to popular lectures, in the Vernacular of the Southern districts, on the metaphysical and ethical questions propounded in the works of the Vedāntins, such as the nature of salvation, the relation of true knowledge and ceremonial works in *Advaitism*, the nature of the universe, the absolute oneness of *Brahman*, &c. The whole was viewed, no doubt, from the special stand-point of the school of Sri Sankaracharya. The powers

of discussion and exposition, as well as the knowledge of the works on the Vedānta, displayed by some of the Pandits were marvellous. The impossibility of arriving at the noumenon by means of the senses, the doctrine of *Māyā* in relation to its power of screening off the One Ultimate Truth from the perception of the *Jiva* and also in relation to the illusory creation by it of a phenomenal world on the basis of the information received from the senses, the efficacy of faith and worship in securing the knowledge that leads to *Moksha* or final liberation, the efficacy of rituals to purify the heart and thus to prepare the way to true knowledge, the renunciation of the world by the man of pure heart and conduct for self-concentrated efforts to realise the Ultimate Source of all,—these and the like topics were handled, both in Sanskrit and in Tamil, with remarkable lucidity of language and clearness of reasoning.

The examination comprised what is generally known as three *prasthānas*, the *Sūtras* with the ten Upanishads and the *Gītā*, all with the commentary of Sri Sankaracharya, to which were added the *Ramānandīya* a commentary on the *Sūtra Bhashya* of Sri Sankara, and the *Advaita Siddhi* and the *Brahmanandīya*, well-known works on the *Advaita* system. We regret to hear that there were only four or five, among the Pandits present, who showed a thorough mastery over the whole course, a fact which shows the neglect of the Vedānta even by its reputed adherents. The promoters of the Sabha have therefore, taken up the question not a minute too early, and we hope that those who yet care for the Vedānta at least as an admirable religious system of philosophy, if not as containing the one true account of our origin, nature and end, will contribute to make this Sabha a permanent centre of investigation and enlightenment.

Neither have you any form, nor sign, nor weapons, nor even dwelling, yet in the form of *Parusha* (Person) you shine to your *Bhaktas*.

Jitanti.

The Hindu idea of incarnation in its broad spiritual form is dealt with fully in *Vishva-kosa-samhita* of the *Pancharatra Agamas*. According to it the presence of God in the world is clearly recognized in the five kinds of His manifestations in material body. These manifestations are: the supreme (*Paratva*), the operative (*Tyāga*), the distinctive (*Vibhava*), the pervasive (*Antaryāmitra*), and the worshippable (*Archaratna*). Of these the third is designated *Vibhava* by reason of its being more comprehensible as exhibiting to man and the higher beings specifically differentiated attributes, as exemplified in the Avatars, Rama, Krishna, &c.

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